

**Written Testimony
S.B. 624**

My name is Russell Mercer, a retired Children's Services Consultant (38 years) for the Department of Children and Families, until my retirement in 2002. I was also employed as a Search Consultant for The Village For Families and Children for 5 years following my retirement from DCF.

For 20 of those years of service, I specialized in working with Adult Adopted Persons (adult adoptees) who wished to access information re: their birth families.

Re: S.B. 624: "An Act Providing Certain Adult Adopted Persons with Access to Parental Health Information and Information in Their Original Birth Certificates", I agree with the **intent** of this bill, but not its **implementation**. As written, this would allow access to this information only for adult adoptees whose adoption was finalized after Oct. 1, 2010.

This, in effect, disenfranchises all those adult adoptees who were born/adopted prior to said date.

Over the years, I've worked with hundreds of adult adoptees wishing to access information re: their birth families. 95% of the time, birth families were willing and anxious to have contact or share information. However, even in those cases, access to the adoptee's original birth certificate was still not allowed, without a laborious process of petitioning the Probate Court. Even in those circumstances where the adoptee only wished to know their given names, and not interested in pursuing contact, this information was denied to them.

Access to birth family information is vital to all adoptees, for a true sense of their identity and especially for pertinent medical history. To continue to deny adult adoptees access to ~~their birth~~ family history is not only unhealthy but continues to treat them as second class citizens.

Prior to 1975, adult adoptees had the right to access this information. In the least, this right should be reinstated.

Sincerely,



Russell Mercer